

University of Wollongong - APAC Accreditation assessment summary report

Higher education provider	University of Wollongong
Name of the Psychology AOU	School of Psychology
Standards version	Version 1.2, 1 January 2019
Purpose of assessment	Initial and Re-accreditation (5 yearly cycle)
Programs and level of study assessed	Bachelor of Arts (Psychology) (Level 1) Bachelor of Arts (Psychology)/Bachelor of Business (Level 1) Bachelor of Arts (Psychology)/Bachelor of Commerce (Level 1) Bachelor of Arts (Psychology)/Bachelor of Laws (Level 1) Bachelor of Arts (Psychology)/Bachelor of Laws (Honours) (Level 1) Bachelor of Psychological Science (Level 1) Bachelor of Psychological Science/Bachelor of Business (Level 1) Bachelor of Psychological Science/Bachelor of Commerce (Level 1) Bachelor of Psychological Science/Bachelor of Laws (Level 1) Bachelor of Psychological Science/Bachelor of Neuroscience (Level 1) Bachelor of Psychological Science/Bachelor of Social Science (Level 1) Bachelor of Social Science (Psychology) (Level 1) <i>*in teach out</i> Bachelor of Psychology (Honours) (packaged Level 1 and 2) Bachelor of Psychology (Honours)/Bachelor of Business (packaged Level 1 and 2) Bachelor of Psychology (Honours)/Bachelor of Commerce (packaged Level 1 and 2) Bachelor of Psychological Science (Honours) (Level 2) Master of Professional Psychology (Level 3)

	Master of Professional Psychology (School Psychology) (Level 3) Doctor of Psychology (Clinical) (packaged Level 3 and 4) <i>*in teach out</i> Doctor of Philosophy (Clinical Psychology) (packaged Level 3 and 4) Master of Psychology (Clinical) (packaged Level 3 and 4)
Campus	Online, Wollongong
Date of site visit	26 - 29 April 2022
Date of APAC Board Determination	11 October 2022
Accreditation start date	1 January 2023
Accreditation end date	31 December 2027

Background and overview

The Australian Psychology Accreditation Council (APAC) last reviewed the University of Wollongong's (UoW) Level 1, packaged Level 1 and 2 four year, Level 2 fourth year and Graduate Diploma, Level 3 Master of Professional Psychology (MPP) and packaged Level 3 and 4 Clinical Masters and Doctorate programs for the purpose of re-accreditation in 2017. This report concerns only the programs delivered at UoW's Wollongong campus and online; please refer to the separate report for UoW's Level 1 program delivered in partnership with Singapore Institute of Management located at the Singapore campus.

At the time of the 2017 review, the Level 1, packaged Level 1 and 2 four year, Level 2 fourth year and packaged Level 3 and 4 programs were accredited without conditions. Further, the Level 3 MPP program was accredited subject to a condition for a shortened period of time as a shortfall was identified against the *Accreditation Standards*. Following the review, the outstanding condition was met and the Level 3 MPP program has since been accredited without conditions.

In 2019, the School of Psychology (School) submitted an out of cycle initial application for accreditation of a Level 3 Master of Professional Psychology (School Psychology) (MPP-SP) program to be offered online. At the time of the review, the program was accredited subject to two conditions as a small number of shortfalls were identified against the *Accreditation Standards*. Subsequent to the initial review, a virtual monitoring site visit was conducted in June 2020, after which all outstanding conditions were satisfied and the program has since been accredited without conditions.

The APAC Assessment Team considered the School's 104 page self-review and attached appendices against the *Accreditation Standards*. Following the Assessment Team conference held on 3 March 2022, additional information was requested and received from the School, including:

- student to staff ratio (SSR) calculations for all programs, including the breakdown of staff at each relevant level for the postgraduate programs
- any benchmarking reports for the suite of programs
- a variety of samples de-identified of student logbooks
- access to *appendix 35* submitted as part of the submission documentation
- details of all placement supervisors' Area of Practice Endorsement (AoPE), including clarification on the Board Approved Supervisors statuses that have lapsed
- a copy of the *Teaching and Assessment: Subject Delivery Policy*
- unit outlines for *PSYC417 Psychological Intervention: Principles and Applications*, *PSYP923 Practicum*, *PSYP924 Advanced Practicum*, *PSYP932 Psychotherapy A*, *PSYP941 Research A*, *PSYP935 Applied Interventions* and *PSYCP946 Research Project B*.

Prior to the virtual site visit, the Assessment Team was provided with a pre-recorded guided tour of the range of facilities at Northfields Psychology Clinic and Northfields Psychology Clinic @ Early Start (Northfields@Early Start) located at on campus.

The APAC Assessment Team conducted a virtual site visit on 26 - 29 April 2022. During the visit, the Assessment Team interviewed a range of individuals, including:

- Head of School
- Executive Dean
- Deputy Head of School (Teaching & Learning)
- Clinic Manager, Northfields Psychology Clinic and Northfields@Early Start
- Clinical Supervision Coordinator
- Internal and external placement supervisors
- Learning and Teaching Committee
- Level 1 (100-level, 200-level, 300-level) and Level 2 (400-level) Program Coordinators
- Level 1 (100-level, 200-level, 300-level) and Level 2 (400-level) Subject Coordinators
- Level 1, packaged Level 1 and 2, Level 2, Level 3 and packed Level 3 and 4 sessional and academic staff
- Level 1, packaged Level 1 and 2, Level 2, Level 3 and packed Level 3 and 4 current students
- Level 2, Level 3 MPP-SP and packed Level 3 and 4 recent graduates
- Level 3 and packaged Level 3 and 4 Unit Coordinators
- School Assessment Committee
- Placement Officer
- Professional and Clinical Program Director
- Professional and Clinical Program Deputy Directors
- Professional staff
- Representatives from the News South Wales (NSW) Department of Education

During the virtual site visit, the Assessment Team was provided with additional information, including:

- details of the AoPE for all placement supervisors

- details of the clinical work that students undertake on placement, including details of the variety of clients and presentations
- clarification around the information provided in the SSR calculations, specifically for the packaged Level 3 and 4 programs
- examples of remediation plans and how these are implemented
- exemplars and marking rubrics for the several postgraduate level units
- unit outlines, completed assessments and research projects for the *PSY410 Honours Empirical Thesis*, *PSY942 Research B* and *PSY946 Research Project B* units
- clarification around the details within the unit outlines for the *PSYP935 Applied Interventions* and *PSYP943 School Psychology in Context (Applied Interventions)* units
- clarification around the assessment grading policy for professional programs and whether all assessments are marked using the satisfactory/unsatisfactory method

The findings in this report are based on the Assessment Team's evaluation of the material outlined above and interview evidence at the time of the virtual site visit.

Key findings

The School is embedded within the Faculty of Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities and has a long-standing history of providing contemporary, research-led psychology education with a strong focus on the scientist-practitioner model and evidence-based curriculum. The School's suite of undergraduate and postgraduate psychology programs empower students with the knowledge, skills and training to practice as a psychologist and research academic within the profession. The direction and support from the School's dynamic and strategically focussed leadership team is well regarded and appreciated. However, the Assessment Team noted that the University's recent structural changes to centralise administrative support has had some impact on staff's ability to fulfil research commitments due to the pressures from increasing administrative work, particularly at the undergraduate level.

The Assessment Team gathered evidence that the Level 1, packaged Level 1 and 2 and Level 2 programs are well managed and coordinated by a cohesive academic team to support student achievement of the graduate competencies. The cohesive culture and strong lines of communication displayed amongst staff is commendable, particularly at the fourth year Honours level resulting in a collaborative culture amongst students who support each other to achieve mutual objectives. There was evidence of some authentic and excellent teaching content relating to cultural responsiveness within the Level 1, packaged Level 1 and 2 and Level 2 programs, and the Assessment Team heard plans to further develop and integrate content and assessment for this competency in this area. Additionally, it was evident that students develop good foundational knowledge and understanding in research ethics. However, the evidence gathered indicated that the School is to further develop content at fourth year for students to strengthen their knowledge in ethical professional conduct to ensure the ongoing protection of the public.

At the time of the virtual site visit, the Assessment Team heard views that the high-quality education, training and carefully scaffolded curriculum enables students to progressively develop their knowledge and competence. The Level 3 MPP-SP program is a strength of the School with a strong and collaborative relationship established with the NSW Department of Education to deliver quality education and training to produce graduates ready to work in the profession. For the packaged Level 3 and 4 program, the Assessment Team noted an emphasis of education and training in psychodynamic therapies and encourages the School to consider depth of training in commonly used psychological assessment and interventions strategies. Further, the intensive week during the orientation period places students in a strong position to commence their studies each semester and is very well received. The Assessment Team recognised the success of the University's recent Interprofessional Education Day and looks forward to receiving further developments regarding the *UoW Interprofessional Education Curriculum Framework*.

The Assessment Team heard a range of views that the online learning environments, teaching facilities and the Northfields Psychology Clinic and Northfields@Early Start are fit-for-purpose and the newly appointed Clinic Manager is well regarded by staff and students. The recent partnership with a consortium of education providers to undertake systematic external benchmarking exercises was noted and it was evident that appropriate mechanisms exist to ensure sufficient external input into the design and ongoing management of the programs from staff, students, graduates, placement supervisors and employers of the profession.

The Assessment Team identified some shortfalls against the *Accreditation Standards* and areas for further quality improvement. The Assessment Team heard challenges with the recent introduction of proctoring software (*Proctorio*) to administer and conduct online examinations and that staff would benefit from more guidance and direction around the use of these services. The School is encouraged to review its unit outlines to ensure accurate and consistent details is represented in relation to the APAC graduate competencies, assessment requirements and marking criteria. It is also recommended that academic staff are provided with guidance and clarity around moderation processes, and a consistent approach is taken to disseminate unit information to students.

The Assessment Team identified several commendable areas. The School is commended for its strong and strategic working relationship with the NSW Department of Education to deliver the Level 3 MPP-SP program and its initiative and development towards the *Interprofessional Education Curriculum Framework*. Further, the strong emphasis on the scientist-practitioner model and its strong integration of research-led curriculum and teaching at all levels of study is commendable.

APAC Board determination

That the following programs at the University of Wollongong are accredited with conditions from **1 January 2023** until **31 December 2027**:

- **Bachelor of Arts (Psychology)/Bachelor of Business** (Level 1) (Campus: Wollongong)
- **Bachelor of Psychological Science/Bachelor of Business** (Level 1) (Campus: Wollongong)
- **Bachelor of Psychology (Honours)/Bachelor of Business** (packaged Level 1 and 2) (Campus: Wollongong)

That the following programs at the University of Wollongong are re-accredited until **31 December 2027**:

- **Bachelor of Arts (Psychology)** (Level 1) (Campus: Wollongong)
- **Bachelor of Arts (Psychology)/Bachelor of Commerce** (Level 1) (Campus: Wollongong)
- **Bachelor of Arts (Psychology)/Bachelor of Laws** (Level 1) (Campus: Wollongong)
- **Bachelor of Arts (Psychology)/Bachelor of Laws (Honours)** (Level 1) (Campus: Wollongong)
- **Bachelor of Psychological Science** (Level 1) (Campus: Wollongong)
- **Bachelor of Psychological Science/Bachelor of Commerce** (Level 1) (Campus: Wollongong)
- **Bachelor of Psychological Science/Bachelor of Laws** (Level 1) (Campus: Wollongong)
- **Bachelor of Psychological Science/Bachelor of Neuroscience** (Level 1) (Campus: Wollongong)
- **Bachelor of Psychological Science/Bachelor of Social Science** (Level 1) (Campus: Wollongong)
- **Bachelor of Social Science (Psychology)** (Level 1) (Campus: Wollongong) **in teach out*
- **Bachelor of Psychology (Honours)** (packaged Level 1 and 2) (Campus: Wollongong)
- **Bachelor of Psychology (Honours)/Bachelor of Commerce** (packaged Level 1 and 2) (Campus: Wollongong)
- **Bachelor of Psychological Science (Honours)** (Level 2) (Campus: Wollongong)
- **Master of Professional Psychology** (Level 3) (Campus: Wollongong)
- **Master of Professional Psychology (School Psychology)** (Level 3) (Campus: Online)
- **Doctor of Psychology (Clinical)** (packaged Level 3 and 4) (Campus: Wollongong) **in teach out*

- **Doctor of Philosophy (Clinical Psychology)** (packaged Level 3 and 4) (Campus: Wollongong)
- **Master of Psychology (Clinical)** (packaged Level 3 and 4) (Campus: Wollongong)

Subject to the following conditions:

For all programs

By **31 January 2023**:

1. To ensure that Standard 2 Academic governance and quality assurance, criterion 2.2 is met, the School is to provide an update and evidence demonstrating systematic and ongoing benchmarking, including the progress and outcomes of external benchmarking activities.
2. To ensure that Standard 3 Program of study, criteria 3.2, 3.7, 3.8 and 3.9 and Standard 5 Assessment, criteria 5.1 and 5.2 are met, the School is to provide evidence demonstrating that the following competencies are sufficiently taught, integrated and appropriately assessed as a required learning outcomes:
 - i. *Level 2 Pre-Professional Competency 2.4* and ethical practice for the Level 2 component of the packaged Level 1 and 2 and Level 2 programs (criteria 3.2, 3.7, 5.1 and 5.2),
 - ii. cultural responsiveness, including with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures for all programs (criteria 3.8, 5.1 and 5.2), and
 - iii. the application of the principles of inter-professional learning and practice for the Level 3 and packaged Level 3 and 4 programs (criteria 3.9, 5.1 and 5.2).

As a monitoring requirement for all programs, the School is to provide an update on the progress and outcomes of the external benchmarking exercise as part of the 2023, 2024, 2025 and 2026 annual reports.

Table 1: Summary of findings regarding each criterion for each Standard

	Level 1	Level 1 & 2	Level 2	Level 3	Level 3 & 4 Clin
Domain 1: Public safety	Standard Statement 1: Public safety is assured				
	Standard is met	Standard is met	Standard is met	Standard is met	Standard is met
Domain 2: Academic governance and quality assurance	Standard Statement 2: Academic governance and quality assurance processes are effective				
	Standard is substantially met	Standard is substantially met	Standard is substantially met	Standard is substantially met	Standard is substantially met
Domain 3: Program of study	Standard Statement 3: Program of study, design, delivery and resourcing enable students to achieve the required graduate competencies				
	Standard is substantially met	Standard is substantially met	Standard is substantially met	Standard is substantially met	Standard is substantially met
Domain 4: The student experience	Standard Statement 4: Students are provided with equitable and timely access to information and support				
	Standard is met	Standard is met	Standard is met	Standard is met	Standard is met
Domain 5: Assessment	Standard Statement 5: Assessment is fair, reliable and valid				
	Standard is substantially met	Standard is substantially met	Standard is substantially met	Standard is substantially met	Standard is substantially met

Quality improvement suggestions

A quality improvement suggestion refers to an action or a course of actions that should be considered by the education provider to improve the delivery and/or outcomes of the program.

The suggestions are as follows. It is recommended that the School of Psychology at the University of Wollongong:

1. reviews its range of unit outlines to ensure that accurate and consistent information is represented for the postgraduate programs.
2. provides academic staff with further guidance and direction around moderation processes.
3. ensures that a consistent approach is taken to disseminate any unit related information and announcements to students.

Commendations

A commendation refers to a particularly significant achievement by the education provider with regard to the program.

The Assessment Team have made the subsequent commendations following the evaluation of the program. The School of Psychology at the University of Wollongong is commended for:

1. the successful implementation and roll out of the Level 3 MPP-SP program and continuing a strong and strategic working relationship with the NSW Department of Education.
2. its collegial and cohesive approach displayed amongst the staff, particularly within the Level 2 program, which has resulted in a collaborative culture amongst Honours students.
3. its contribution towards the initiation and development of the *Interprofessional Education curriculum framework*, including the *Interprofessional Education Day* for postgraduate students.
4. its strong focus and emphasis on the scientist-practitioner model and its strong integration of research-led curriculum and teaching at all levels of study.